

DATE

Ms. Karen Quebedeaux Smith
Justice of the Peace, Ward 3, District 6
182 Northwood Road
Arnaudville, LA 70512

**Re: Louisiana Board of Ethics Docket No. 2021-1017
Advisory Opinion**

Dear Ms. Smith:

The Louisiana Board of Ethics, at its February 4, 2022 meeting, considered your request for an advisory opinion as to whether the Code of Governmental Ethics ("Code") requires Justices of the Peace to take the annual ethics training for public employees.

FACTS PROVIDED

You stated that you are a Justice of the Peace for St. Landry Parish, District 6. St. Landry Parish government, and specifically Parish President Jessie Bellard, has informed you that you are required by law to take the annual ethics training required of public employees pursuant to the Code. You requested this advisory opinion to determine if Justices of the Peace are required to take the ethics training required of public employees pursuant to the Code.

LAW

La. R.S. 42:1170A(3)(a)(i) provides that each public servant shall receive a minimum of one hour of education and training on the Code of Governmental Ethics during each year of his public employment or term of office as the case may be.

La. R.S. 42:1167 provides that all judges, as defined by the Code of Judicial Conduct, shall be governed exclusively by the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which shall be administered by the Judiciary Commission provided for in Article V, Section 25 of the Constitution of Louisiana.

Ethics Board Advisory Opinion 2014-1537 concluded that a justice of the peace is defined as a "judge" by the Code of Judicial Conduct, and that justices of the peace are exempt from the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics.

ANALYSIS

As set forth in Ethics Board Advisory Opinion No. 2014-1537, Justices of the Peace are considered "judges" under the Code of Judicial Conduct. Therefore, pursuant to La. R.S. 42:1167, Justices of the Peace are governed exclusively by the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct, as opposed to the Code of Governmental Ethics. As the annual ethics training required of public employees is established by La. R.S. 42:1170A(3)(a)(i), this requirement does not apply to Justices of the Peace, and you are not required to take the annual ethics training required of public employees by such statute.

CONCLUSION

The Board concluded, and instructed me to inform you, that the annual training requirement established in La. R.S. 1170A(3)(a)(i) does not apply to you as a Justice of the Peace.

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as set forth herein. Changes to the facts as presented may result in a different application of the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics. The Louisiana Board of Ethics issues no opinion as to past conduct or as to laws other than the Code of Governmental Ethics, the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act, the Lobbyist Disclosure Acts, and the conflict of interest provisions contained in the Louisiana Gaming Control Law. If you have any questions, please contact me at (800) 842-6630 or (225) 219-5600.

Sincerely,

LOUISIANA BOARD OF ETHICS

Charles E. Reeves, Jr.
For the Board

DISCLAIMER
This is a draft opinion and it is **NOT** an opinion of the Louisiana Board of Ethics. No party may rely on the facts or conclusions. The analysis and conclusions herein are provided for discussion purposes only, and are subject to change or revision at the meeting of the Board of Ethics at which this matter is considered.